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OCI No. 8461
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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
26 September 1953

Implications of the French UN Delegate's
25 September Speech

The French Foreign Ministry announcement that Maurice Schumann's 25 September speech to the UN General Assembly represents no departure in French policy is borne out by fuller excerpts from the speech itself. In context, the items played up by the press are not startling in the light of earlier French requests for discussion of the Indochina question at the Korean political conference; and there is no intimation that France is not going to implement the Navarre plan in Indochina.

Schumann's remark probably should be considered more in relation to the internal French political scene than to international problems. If Laniel and Bidault are sincere in their protestations to American officials that ratification of the EDC treaty is to be pushed this year, Schumann's speech could be an attempt to gain the broadest possible public and parliamentary support in France. The hint of additional guarantees against German militarism and the appeal for an over-all settlement with the USSR, coupled with a strong defense of European integration tend to bear out this interpretation, though possibly pointing to further delay in the government's efforts to obtain EDC ratification. All Frenchmen can be expected to respond to an appeal to end the Indochina war, control German resurgence, relax the cold war, and above all, to applaud any move reasserting French claims to leadership on the continent. The timing could be an effort to counterbalance parliamentary preoccupation with the economic issues facing the National Assembly when it reconvenes on 6 October.

Document No. 018
No Change in Class. ☐
☒ Declassified
Class. Changed To: TS S C
Auth: ED TS-2
Date: 17 JUL 1978 By:

Document No.

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On the international level, France may be trying to reestablish confidence in its leadership in Europe by the suggestion that it is considering its own version of the Churchill and Adenauer proposals for a Locarno type solution to the German problem. In view of Chancellor Adenauer's electoral victory and Germany's growing prominence on the continent, the French may feel impelled to take the diplomatic initiative. A bold diplomatic step could also serve as a basis for bargaining with France's allies.

Schumann's speech could serve a double purpose in regard to the Orbit. It challenges Moscow to demonstrate Soviet sincerity on European negotiations and makes a similar challenge to both Moscow and Peiping on Far Eastern questions. The speech could also be a move to capitalize diplomatically on the Navarre plan now rather than run the risk of having to negotiate from a greatly weakened position if the plan fails. In particular, France may be hoping that the Communists see a parallel to the Korean situation in the present status of American aid to Indochina.

In Indochina, however, any hint that the French might negotiate a settlement of the Indochina war tends to raise the fear among supporters of the Bao Dai government that they will be sold out and increases the difficulty that government faces in attracting popular support. Schumann's specific reference to the governments of the Associated States, their link with France and recognition by other powers will nevertheless serve to minimize these adverse reactions.